



Honoring Mothers on Their Day

By U.S. Sen. John Cornyn

On May 13, families across Texas celebrate the annual rite of Mother's Day, a day to honor an irreplaceable person in each of our lives. It's a recognition we would do well to extend every day of the year.

Mother's Day is an opportunity to reflect on just how much we love and owe the woman who gave us life and raised us. Children traditionally dust kitchens with pancake mix in preparation for mom's well-deserved breakfast in bed.

As I travel around Texas, I see the essential family work being done by mothers, some of whom have earned the title through adoption. I have come to see that Mother's Day has a special meaning for women who have decided to enrich their lives by providing a child with a loving family.

Adoption is not easy. It can be legally complicated, fraught with risk and potential disappointment. But Texans are optimistic and generous. They give freely and are enriched by their generosity of spirit.

Adoptive parents know that achieving great joy for themselves and others often requires taking a risk and making sacrifices. They are more than willing to do so.

It's worth remembering: "We should not be asking who this child belongs to, but who belongs to this child."

Drs. Larry Anderson and Sasha Vukelja of Tyler found they belonged to a young Russian orphan from St. Petersburg who visited East Texas as part of a Christian exchange program.

Boris and nine other orphans first came to Tyler in 2003 for the "Miracle of Christmas Tour," sponsored by the Nightlight Christian Foundation. Following their "vacation" in Tyler, most of the children in the group were adopted by local families.

"It's really like he's always been a part of our family," Dr. Vukelja said. "He's certainly brought so much joy. We just think he's a miracle."

Americans adopt more children from foreign countries than the citizens of all other countries combined. The number of children Americans have adopted from foreign countries has doubled over the past decade.

No matter where adopted children come from, the act of adoption itself represents the value that

Americans place on the worth of each human life.

There are many ways to pursue this noble idea, including domestic public agencies, private adoptions or international adoptions. The lives of all children must be cherished and protected regardless of their place of birth or circumstances.

Another way of helping children is by providing them a safe and stable home while they await adoption.

Patti and Dave Tuttle of San Antonio have done just this by fostering 202 babies, adopting several of them, over the past 22 years. I was pleased to nominate the Tuttles for the National Angels in Adoption Award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, an honor they received last year.

One of their adopted daughters, Kallie, weighed barely five pounds when she was found abandoned in a paper bag in southwest San Antonio in 1989. She was placed in the Tuttle home as their 43rd foster baby. They adopted her when she was six months old.

Kallie is now a thriving teenager, and is a loving, caring big sister as the Tuttles continue to provide a home for more children in need. Patti Tuttle says that Kallie is a constant source of excitement and commitment, an ambassador "for the journey of fostering and adoption."

The Tuttles, and particularly Patti Tuttle, provide inspiring proof of the difference that a single point of light can make in this world. Mother's Day provides a perfect opportunity to recognize and thank the women in our lives who provide the love, care and nurture that no else can.

Sen. Cornyn serves on the Armed Services, Judiciary and Budget Committees. In addition, he is Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Ethics. He serves as the top Republican on the Judiciary Committee's Immigration, Border Security and Refugees subcommittee and the Armed Services Committee's Airland subcommittee. Cornyn served previously as Texas Attorney General, Texas Supreme Court Justice and Bexar County District Judge. For Sen. Cornyn's previous Texas Times columns: www.cornyn.senate.gov/column